

REMARKS

Now in the application are Claims 1-29, of which Claims 1, 7, 13, 20, 22, 27, 28, and 29 are independent. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance. No new matter is added and no new issues are raised by this Response. Applicants respectfully urge the Examiner to reconsider the outstanding rejections and to pass the claims to allowance in view of the remarks set forth below.

Rejection of Claims 1-29 under 35 U.S.C. §103:

The Office Action rejects Claims 1-29 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,341,239 of Hyashi, et al. (hereinafter "Hyashi") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2003/0012212 A1 of Earnshaw, et al. (hereinafter "Earnshaw"). Applicants' respectfully traverse this rejection based on perfecting a right of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119.

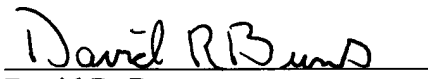
The cited Earnshaw reference fails to qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and, hence, fails to qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Filed herewith is an English language translation of Applicants certified priority document and a verification of translation from the translator to perfect Applicant's right of priority, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.55(a)(4). Applicants' perfected foreign priority filing date of April 13, 2000, antedates the March 14, 2001, filing date of the Earnshaw reference. Accordingly, Hyashi in view of Earnshaw fail to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for use in the rejection of Claims 1-29.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claims 1- 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants contend that Claims 1-29 define over the cited art. If there are any remaining issues, an opportunity for an interview is requested prior to the issuance of another Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: December 18, 2003